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A volunteer fills up a vehicle with food boxes at the St. Mary's Food Bank Wednesday, June 29, 2022, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

Long lines are back at U.S. food banks as inflation hits high

By ANITA SNOW and EUGENE GARCIA

PHOENIX (AP) — Long lines are back at food banks around the U.S. as working Americans overwhelmed by inflation turn to hand-outs to help feed their families.

With gas prices soaring along with grocery costs, many people are seeking charitable food for the first time, and more are arriving on foot.

Inflation in the U.S. is at a 40-year high and gas prices have been surging since April 2020, with the aver-

age cost nationwide briefly hitting \$5 a gallon in June. Rapidly rising rents and an end to federal COVID-19 relief have also taken a financial toll.

The food banks, which had started to see some relief as people returned to work after pandemic shutdowns, are struggling to meet the latest need even as federal programs provide less food to distribute, grocery store donations wane and cash gifts don't go nearly as far. Tomasina John was among hundreds of families lined up in several lanes of cars

that went around the block one recent day outside St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix. John said her family had never visited a food bank before because her husband had easily supported her and their four children with his construction work.

"But it's really impossible to get by now without some help," said John, who traveled with a neighbor to share gas costs as they idled under a scorching desert sun. "The prices are way too high."

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Continued from Front

Jesus Pascual was also in the queue.

"It's a real struggle," said Pascual, a janitor who estimated he spends several hundred dollars a month on groceries for him, his wife and their five children aged 11 to 19.

The same scene is repeated across the nation, where food bank workers predict a rough summer keeping ahead of demand.

The surge in food prices comes after state governments ended COVID-19 disaster declarations that temporarily allowed increased benefits under SNAP, the federal food stamp program covering some 40 million Americans.

"It does not look like it's going to get better overnight," said Katie Fitzgerald, president and chief operating officer for the national food bank network Feeding America. "Demand is really making the supply challenges complex."

Charitable food distribution has remained far above amounts given away before the coronavirus pandemic, even though demand tapered off somewhat late last year.

Feeding America officials say second quarter data won't be ready until August, but they are hearing anecdotally from food banks nationwide that demand is soaring.

The Phoenix food bank's main distribution center doled out food packages to 4,271 families during the third week in June, a 78% increase over the 2,396 families served during the same week last year, said St. Mary's spokesman Jerry Brown.



Volunteers fill up grocery carts with food boxes for distribution into drive through vehicles at the St. Mary's Food Bank Wednesday, June 29, 2022, in Phoenix.

More than 900 families line up at the distribution center every weekday for an emergency government food box stuffed with goods such as canned beans, peanut butter and rice, said Brown. St. Mary's adds products purchased with cash donations, as well as food provided by local supermarkets like bread, carrots and pork chops for a combined package worth about \$75.

Distribution by the Alameda County Community Food Bank in Northern California has ticked up since hitting a pandemic low at the beginning of this year, increasing from 890 households served on the third Friday in January to 1,410 households on the third Friday in June, said marketing director Michael Altfest.

At the Houston Food Bank, the largest food bank in the U.S. where food distribution levels earlier in the pandemic briefly peaked at a staggering 1 million pounds a day, an average of 610,000 pounds is now being given out daily. That's up from about 500,000 pounds a day before the pandemic, said spokeswoman Paula Murphy said.

Murphy said cash donations have not eased, but inflation ensures they don't go as far.

Food bank executives said the sudden surge in demand caught them off guard.

"Last year, we had expected a decrease in demand for 2022 because the economy had been doing so well," said Michael Flood, CEO for the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank. "This issue with inflation came on pretty suddenly."

"A lot of these are people who are working and did OK during the pandemic and maybe even saw their wages go up," said Flood. "But they have also seen food prices go up beyond their budgets."

The Los Angeles bank gave away about 30 million pounds of food during the first three months of this year, slightly less than the previous quarter but still far more than the 22 million pounds given away during the first quarter of 2020.

Feeding America's Fitzgerald is calling on USDA and Congress to find a way to restore hundreds of millions of dollars worth of commodities recently lost with the end of several temporary programs to provide food to people in need. USDA commodities, which generally can represent as much as 30% of the food the banks disperse, accounted for more than 40% of all food distributed in fiscal year 2021 by the Feeding America network.

"There is a critical need for the public sector to purchase more food now," said Fitzgerald.

During the Trump administration, USDA bought sever-

al billions of dollars in pork, apples, dairy, potatoes and other products in a program that gave most of it to food banks. The "Food Purchase & Distribution Program" designed to help American farmers harmed by tariffs and other practices of U.S. trade partners has since ended. There was \$1.2 billion authorized for the 2019 fiscal year and another \$1.4 billion authorized for fiscal 2020.

Another temporary USDA "Farmers to Families" program that provided emergency relief provided more than 155 million food boxes for families in need across the U.S. during the height of the pandemic before ending May 31, 2021.

A USDA spokesperson noted the agency is using \$400 million from the Build Back Better initiative to establish agreements with states, territories and tribal governments to buy food from local, regional and underserved producers that can be given to food banks, schools and other feeding programs.

For now, there's enough food, but there might not be in the future, said Michael G. Manning, president and CEO at Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in Louisiana.

He said high fuel costs also make it far more expensive to collect and distribute food.

The USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program,

which included Farmers to Families, was "a boon" for the Alameda County Community Food Bank, providing 5 billion pounds of commodities over a single year, said spokesman Altfest.

"So losing that was a big hit," he said.

Altfest said as many as 10% of the people now seeking food are first timers, and a growing number are showing up on foot rather than in cars to save gas.

"The food they get from us is helping them save already-stretched budgets for other expenses like gas, rent, diapers and baby formula," he said.

Meanwhile, food purchases by the bank have jumped from a monthly average of \$250,000 before the pandemic to as high as \$1.5 million now because of food prices. Rocketing gasoline costs forced the bank to increase its fuel budget by 66%, Altfest said.

Supply chain issues are also a problem, requiring the food bank to become more aggressive with procurement.

"We used to reorder when our inventory dropped to three weeks' worth, now we reorder up to six weeks out," said Altfest.

He said the food bank has already ordered and paid for whole chickens, stuffing, cranberries and other holiday feast items it will distribute for Thanksgiving, the busiest time of the year.

At the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation in Montebello east of Los Angeles, workers say they are seeing many families along with older people like Diane Martinez, who lined up one recent morning on foot.

Some of the hundreds of mostly Spanish-speaking recipients had cars parked nearby. They carried cloth bags, cardboard boxes or shoved pushcarts to pick up their food packages from the distribution site the Los Angeles bank serves.

"The prices of food are so high and they're going up higher every day," said Martinez, who expressed gratitude for the bags of black beans, ground beef and other groceries. "I'm so glad that they're able to help us." □

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Associated Press

Bill attempts to prevent political meddling in U.S. head count

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**
Associated Press

New questions on a census form would have to be vetted by Congress and a U.S. Census Bureau director couldn't be fired without cause under proposed legislation that attempts to prevent in the future the type of political interference into the nation's 2020 head count that took place during the Trump administration.

The legislation introduced this week in the U.S. House of Representatives would put in place roadblocks against attempted political meddling in the once-a-decade census that determines how many congressional seats each state gets and the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year, according to U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y., the bill's sponsor.

"The census is a foundation of American democracy, and it must be protected from partisan interference," said Maloney, the chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, which was holding a hearing on the bill Thursday.

In the years leading up to the 2020 census, the Trump



This Sunday, April 5, 2020, file photo, shows an envelope containing a 2020 census letter mailed to a U.S. resident in Detroit.

administration unsuccessfully tried to add a citizenship question to the census questionnaire, a move that advocates feared would scare off Hispanics and immigrants from participating, whether they were in the country legally or not. The Supreme Court blocked the question.

The Trump administration also unsuccessfully tried to get the Census Bureau to exclude people in the country illegally from popu-

lation figures used for divvying up congressional seats among the states, also called the apportionment numbers.

Critics claimed the citizenship question was inspired by a Republican redistricting expert who believed using citizen voting-age population instead of the total population for the purpose of redrawing of congressional and legislative districts could be advantageous to Republicans and non-

Hispanic whites.

The Trump administration pushed to have the apportionment numbers released before President Donald Trump left the White House in January 2021, cutting short the schedule for field operations that had been extended because of the pandemic. The bill would vest the Census Bureau director with all technical, operational and statistical decisions for the once-a-decade census.

The Trump administration named an unusually high number of political appointees without prior experience in the statistical agency to top positions in the Census Bureau. The proposed legislation would limit the number of political appointees to three: the Census Bureau director and two others positions. All other positions would have to be filled by career civil service workers, including the position of a deputy director, who would be required to have knowledge or experience with the Census Bureau.

Even though many of the Trump administration's political efforts ultimately failed, some advocates believe they did have an impact, with significantly larger undercounts of most racial and ethnic minorities in the 2020 census compared to the 2010 census.

The Black population in the 2020 census had a net undercount of 3.3%, while it was almost 5% for Hispanics and 5.6% for American Indians and Native Alaskans living on reservations. Those identifying as some other race had a net undercount of 4.3%. □

Associated Press

Planners break ground for new Gulf War memorial in DC

By **ASHRAF KHALIL**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Over 30 years after a U.S.-led international military coalition expelled occupying Iraqi troops from Kuwait, planners have broken ground on the long-simmering plans for a Gulf War memorial.

Hundreds gathered Thursday morning for a groundbreaking ceremony at the corner of Constitution and 23rd streets, where the memorial will be located. Organizers have pushed to create the memorial for years, after the concept was approved by Congress in 2014.

"We're here because we all agree that honoring these American warriors is a worthy cause," said Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark., who co-authored the legislation

authorizing the memorial's construction. He called the conflict "an important moment in our nation's tradition of fighting tyranny."

Scott Stump, CEO of the memorial association, recalled years of "toil, struggle pain, heartache, ups and downs," with fundraising challenges and multiple design revisions.

"We were told that there weren't enough organizations that were interested in our message," Stump said. When completed, Stump said he expects the memorial to attract millions of visitors to a prime location near both the Lincoln Memorial and Vietnam Veterans' Memorial.

Known as the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial, the monument will feature a circular open-air design with features

meant to evoke the sand dunes of the desert battleground.

Admiral Christopher Grady, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called it a fitting tribute to the 299 U.S. soldiers who died during the conflict.

"It was those in uniform and all those who supported them that we remember today," he said.

Grady also cited the Gulf War as a lasting example of international cooperation and partnership among nations to defend Kuwait's sovereignty.

"This is one of our competitive advantages — the friends that we have but others don't," he said.

The plan has come together with the active involvement of the Kuwaiti government, which donated \$10 million to the effort.



Scott C. Stump, left, President of the National Desert Storm Memorial Association, Salem Abdullah, third from left, Kuwait ambassador to the United States, Gulf War veterans, and invitees participate in a groundbreaking ceremony for the new National Desert Storm and Desert Storm Memorial Thursday, July 14, 2022 on the National Mall in Washington.

Associated Press

"From the people of Kuwait to the United States: thank you, thank you, thank you," said long-serving Kuwaiti ambassador Salem

Al-Sabah on Thursday. Al-Sabah called the memorial "a token of gratitude to the noble soldiers who helped liberate my country." □

Amazon handed Ring footage to police without user consent

By **HALELUYA HADERO**

Amazon has provided Ring doorbell footage to law enforcement 11 times this year without the user's permission, a revelation that's bound to raise more privacy and civil liberty concerns about its video-sharing agreements with police departments across the country.

The disclosure came in a letter from the company that was made public Wednesday by U.S. Sen. Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat who sent a separate letter to Amazon last month questioning Ring's surveillance practices and engagement with law enforcement.

Ring has said before it will not share customer information with police without consent, a warrant or due to "an exigent or emergency" circumstance. The 11 videos shared this year fell under the emergency provision, Amazon's letter said, the first time the company publicly shared such information. The letter, dated July 1, did not say which videos were shared with police.

Brian Huseman, Amazon's vice president for public policy, wrote in the letter that in each instance, "Ring



A Ring doorbell camera is seen installed outside a home in Wolcott, Conn., on July 16, 2019. Associated Press

made a good-faith determination that there was an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to a person requiring disclosure of information without delay."

In such cases, Huseman wrote Ring "reserves the right to respond immediately to urgent law enforcement requests for information," adding the company makes a determination as to when to share video footage without user consent based on information

provided to it in an emergency request form and circumstances described by law enforcement.

Some prior requests from law enforcement have raised concerns about how police might be attempting to use Ring footage. Last year, the non-profit digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation reported the Los Angeles Police Department requested Ring footage of Black Lives Matter protests from users in 2020.

In a statement, Markey's office said the findings show a close relationship between Ring and law enforcement and a proliferation of police using the platform.

Amazon said in its letter 2,161 law enforcement agencies are enrolled in Ring's Neighbors app, a forum for residents to share suspicious videos captured by their home security cameras. That number represents a five-fold increase since November 2019, according to the senator's of-

ice.

"As my ongoing investigation into Amazon illustrates, it has become increasingly difficult for the public to move, assemble, and converse in public without being tracked and recorded," Markey said in a statement. Among other things, the senator's statement also criticized the company for not clarifying the distance Ring products can capture audio recordings. The company had said in its response letter what Ring captures "depends on many conditions, including device placement and environmental conditions."

The Ring disclosure comes as Amazon is facing broader antitrust scrutiny in Congress about its ecommerce business, and accusations of undercutting merchants that sell on its platform by making "knock-offs," or very similar products, and boosting their presence on its site. Markey and several other Democratic lawmakers are also pushing for a bill that prohibits the use of biometric technology by federal agencies and tie federal grant funding to states and localities on the condition they put a moratorium on the use of such technology. □

Ivana Trump, first wife of former president, dies at 73



Ivana Trump announces the new "Italiano Diet" to stay healthy and fight obesity at the Oak Room at the Plaza Hotel on June 13, 2018, in New York.

Associated Press

By **JILL COLVIN and JENNIFER PELTZ**

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ivana Trump, who formed half of

a publicity power couple in the 1980s as the first wife of former President Donald Trump and mother of his oldest children, has died in

New York City, her family announced Thursday. She was 73.

"I am very saddened to inform all of those that loved her, of which there are many, that Ivana Trump has passed away at her home in New York City," Trump posted on Truth Social. "She was a wonderful, beautiful, and amazing woman, who led a great and inspirational life. Her pride and joy were her three children, Donald Jr., Ivanka, and Eric. She was so proud of them, as we were all so proud of her. Rest In Peace, Ivana!" The Trump family also released a statement. "It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Ivana Trump. Our mother was an incredible woman — a

force in business, a world-class athlete, a radiant beauty, and caring mother and friend. Ivana Trump was a survivor.

"She fled from communism and embraced this country," the statement continued. "She taught her children about grit and toughness, compassion and determination. She will be dearly missed by her mother, her three children and ten grandchildren."

The Trumps were a power couple in New York in the 1980s before their equally public, and messy, divorce after Donald Trump met his next wife, Marla Maples. But in recent years, Ivana Trump had been on good terms with her former husband. She wrote in a 2017 book that they spoke about

once a week.

Ivana told the New York Post in 2016 that she was both a supporter and adviser to the former president.

"I suggest a few things," she told the paper. "We speak before and after the appearances and he asks me what I thought." She said she advised him to "be more calm."

"But Donald cannot be calm," she added. "He's very outspoken. He just says it as it is." She was born Ivana Zelnickova in 1949 in the Czechoslovak city of Gottwaldov, the former city of Zlin that just had been renamed by the Communists, who took over the country in 1948. She married Trump, her second husband, in 1977. □

Nations discuss coordinating Ukraine war crimes probes

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor called Thursday for an "overarching strategy" to bring perpetrators of war crimes in Ukraine to justice, and representatives from dozens of countries pledged to cooperate in their investigations.

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, his military forces have been accused of abuses ranging from killings in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha to deadly attacks on civilian facilities, including the March 16 bombing of a theater in Mariupol that an Associated Press investigation established likely killed close to 600 people.

"The simple truth is that, as we speak, children, women and men, the young and the old, are living in terror," ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan said as he opened the Ukraine Accountability Conference in The Hague. Khan said Thursday's ministerial meeting addressed "a need of coordination, of coherence" and "the need of an overarching strategy" as different nations and courts work to investigate and prosecute crimes.

The AP and Frontline, which are tracking incidents in Ukraine, have so far tallied 338 potential war crimes. As the meeting got underway in The Hague, Russian missiles struck the central



Volunteers load bodies of civilians killed in Bucha onto a truck to be taken to a morgue for investigation, in the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, April 12, 2022.

Associated Press

Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia in what Ukraine's president called "an open act of terrorism" on the country's civilian population.

Speaking to reporters after the conference, Ukraine's prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, held up a photograph that appeared to show a child's body as she discussed Thursday's airstrike.

"Today, 20 people killed by Russian missiles, including three children, 52 injured by Russian missiles, including children. And this information we have every day from morning to night, night to morning," she said.

U.S. State Department hu-

man rights envoy Uzra Zeya accused Russian forces of atrocities as she delivered a message to the conference from Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"With each day, the war crimes mount. Rape, torture, extrajudicial executions, disappearances, forced deportations. Attacks on schools, hospitals, playgrounds, apartment buildings, grain silos, water and gas facilities," Zeya said. "These are not the acts of rogue units they fit a clear pattern across every part of Ukraine touched by Russia's forces."

About 40 nations from the European Union and

around the world sent representatives to The Hague for the conference hosted by Khan, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Wopke Hoekstra and the European Union's justice commissioner, Didier Reynders.

Investigations of military crimes committed during the nearly 5-month war in Ukraine are underway around Europe; more than 23,000 war crimes cases have been registered in Ukraine alone, Venediktova said. The ICC and 14 EU member nations also have launched investigations.

"Words are cheap. Too much has been promised for too long. And I think to-

day, from many vantage points, represents a realization that we, as lawyers and investigators, need to take the law off the page and put it into action," ICC prosecutor Khan said as the meeting wrapped up.

Delegates agreed to set up a dialogue group to link and streamline the various investigations.

"We need to translate our shared and strong conviction for justice into a unified answer against impunity and use the results of this conference as a blueprint to respond to cruelties and crimes committed in Ukraine and in the rest of the world," Hoekstra said. □

In a video message to the meeting, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called for the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute Russian leaders for the crime of aggression when one state launches an unjustified attack on another.

The ICC doesn't have jurisdiction to prosecute the crime of aggression in Ukraine because neither Russia nor Ukraine is among the court's 123 member states.

Kyiv has, however, accepted the court's jurisdiction and that cleared the way for Khan to open an investigation in Ukraine in early March after dozens of the global court's member nations asked him to intervene. □

Spain's running of the bulls ends with swift race, 6 hurt

PAMPLONA, Spain (AP) — Bulls from Spain's revered Miura ranch starred in a fast and uncomplicated final running of the bulls at this year's San Fermín Festival on Thursday.

The Navarra regional government said six people were treated for minor injuries following Thursday's run that lasted just over two minutes. Initially, the Spanish Red Cross said two people needed treatment.

No horn gorings were reported as the Miuras, known for their alertness

and speed of reaction, kept mainly in a pack and took little notice of the runners as they raced to the bullring.

One runner escaped serious injury when one bull's horn appeared to graze the right side of his head before he fell to the ground.

The festival's eighth and final 8 a.m. run saw hundreds of people, mostly men and far fewer than usual, test their agility to accompany six fighting bulls and their guiding steer along an 875-meter (956-yard) route

through Pamplona to the city's bullring.

The bulls are killed by professional bullfighters later in the day.

Tens of thousands of visitors attend the Pamplona festival, which was immortalized in Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises." The festival is also popular for its 24-hour partying.

During this year's festival, which started July 6, four people were gored, none seriously.

Eight people were gored in



People run through the streets with fighting bulls and steers during the last day of the running of the bulls at the San Fermín festival in Pamplona, northern Spain, Thursday, July 14, 2022.

Associated Press

2019, the last festival before a two-year hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sixteen people have died in Pamplona's bull runs since 1910, with the last death in 2009. □

Solomons leader: Chinese base would make his people targets

SUVA, Fiji (AP) — Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare said Thursday that his country's new security pact with Beijing would not allow China to build a military base on the South Pacific nation and make his citizens "targets for potential military strikes."

Sogavare struck an agreement with Beijing in April to provide security support. Details of the pact haven't been made public but the deal has raised fears of a permanent Chinese military facility within 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) of the northeast Australian coast. He used a meeting of Pacific island nation leaders Thursday in Fiji to strongly deny that his country would become a Chinese military foothold in the South Pacific.

"The moment we establish a foreign military base, we immediately become an enemy. And we also put our country and our people as targets for potential military strikes," Sogavare told reporters in the capital Suva.

"There is no military base, nor any other military facility or institutions, in the



Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare reviews an honor guard during a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on Oct. 9, 2019.

Associated Press

agreement. And that's a very important point that we continue to reiterate to the family in the region," he added.

Without naming the United States or the Solomons' key security partner Australia, Sogavare told his parliament in May that opponents of the Chinese pact had threatened his country and insulted it.

Both the United States and

Australia have told the Solomon Islands that the country hosting a Chinese military base would not be tolerated.

New Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's government has since been elected on a promise of more aid and engagement with the country's island neighbors.

Sogavare greeted Albanese with a hug on

Wednesday at their first face-to-face meeting that took place in Suva during a Pacific Islands Forum leaders' summit. The forum had been a collection of 18 island nations until Kiribati withdrew this week.

Albanese described the meeting as "very constructive," stressing that "interests of Australia would not be served by having a military base so close to where

Australia is."

"I welcome his (Sogavare's) comments ruling out there being a Chinese base (near) Australia," Albanese said.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said she had spoken frankly with Sogavare during a meeting on Wednesday of her concerns about the Chinese pact. She said the two leaders found "common ground" on the need to limit militarization in the region.

The leaders' summit has been soaked in geopolitical tension between China and the United States, which have both shown heightened strategic interest in the region.

Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, who chaired the summit, told his fellow leaders in an opening address that the "global and geopolitical landscape is hotly competitive."

"We are seeing a multipolar system emerge, all clamoring to shape the world in their favor," Bainimarama said.

Bainimarama invited U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris to deliver a virtual address on Wednesday. □

Outbreaks from animals in Africa surge by 60% in last decade

LONDON (AP) — The number of outbreaks of diseases that jumped from animals to humans in Africa has surged by more than 60% in the last decade, the World Health Organization said, a worrying sign the planet could face increased animal-borne diseases like monkeypox, Ebola and coronavirus in the future.

There has been a 63% rise in the number of animal diseases breaching the species barrier from 2012 to 2022, as compared to the decade before, the U.N. health agency said in a statement on Thursday.

There was a particular spike from 2019 to 2020, when diseases originating in animals that later infected humans, made up half of all significant public health events in Africa, said WHO. Diseases like Ebola and other hemorrhagic fevers



A medical worker sprays people being discharged from the Island Clinic Ebola treatment center in Monrovia, Liberia, on Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014.

Associated Press

were responsible for 70% of those outbreaks, in addition to illnesses like monkeypox, dengue, anthrax and plague.

"We must act now to contain zoonotic diseases before they can cause widespread infections and stop

Africa from becoming a hotspot for emerging infectious diseases," WHO's Africa director, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti said in a statement.

While diseases in animals had infected people for centuries in Africa, recent developments like quicker

travel across the continent have made it easier for viruses to cross borders, she said.

WHO also noted that Africa has the world's fastest-growing population, which increases urbanization and reduces roaming areas for wild animals. Scientists also fear that outbreaks that may have once been contained to distant, rural areas can now spread more quickly to Africa's large cities with international travel links, that might then carry the diseases around the world.

During the West Africa Ebola outbreak that began in 2014, it was not until the disease arrived in capital cities that its spread became explosive, ultimately killing more than 10,000 people and arriving in several cities in Europe and the U.S.

Until May, monkeypox had

not been known to cause significant outbreaks beyond central and West Africa, where it has sickened people for decades. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are now more than 11,000 cases worldwide in 65 countries, the majority of which had not previously reported monkeypox.

WHO announced that it will hold an emergency meeting next week to assess if monkeypox should be declared a global emergency. Last month, the agency said the outbreak did not yet warrant the declaration but said it would review issues such as the possibility that monkeypox might be infecting more vulnerable populations like children, and whether the virus is causing more severe disease. □

Eagle LNG Aruba held information sessions for the public regarding gas project

Eagle LNG organized three days of information for which they invited the general public to find out more about the project to bring natural gas to Aruba, for the production of electricity. The last information session is today, 6-9pm at MFA Savaneta.

Part of the environmental impact study involves the practice of public meetings with the community in order to know about any doubt or concern regarding the project, so that this can be incorporated in the environmental impact study. Thus these information sessions are part of the agenda.

The goal right now is to replace the use of fuel oil with natural gas. According to Eagle LNG, the big advantage is that natural gas is the cleanest fuel that can be used to generate electricity. The project consists of two components, which within an area in the RDA property the terminal will be constructed to receive the LNG, and then the pipeline will be built to send the natural gas from the terminal at WEB Aruba.

At the session on Wednesday, our reporter noticed that the community had critical questions, among which, what will be the economic impact of this project, tax revenue, jobs, and more. Leopoldo Henriquez, representative for the Royal Netherlands Society of Engineers (KIVI) commented that before an Environmental Impact Assessment can be carried out, a Safety Assessment must be done. Mr. Henriquez highlighted: "It was already brought forward that your engineers are not aware of Risk Analysis and QRA. They lack the informa-

tion and knowledge, especially in the Netherlands where there are a lot of problems with big disasters and that's why we know about it. How will you handle this?"

Eagle LNG answered that they are in the process of developing the QRA, and that this will be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment. "We have a lot of experience building LNG terminals. And that's also the reason why we have Royalhaskoning with us", Mr. Alejandro Bastardo, Project Manager of Eagle LNG Aruba, commented. Through the international standard required to design the LNG facility and pipeline, it's mandatory to do a QRA analysis, thus there is no reason to worry, Eagle LNG Aruba emphasizes. "The QRA will surely be included."

Javier Diaz, Environmental Consultant of Eco Vision NV in Curaçao, explained that they were invited as an independent party to analyze the situation of the flora and fauna in the areas in which the project will be developed. He explained to our reporter that the area for the project is not the only thing they must observe, but must also take into consideration the impact area. "These areas must also be researched to see how you can manage it or adjust the way you construct", Mr. Diaz said. The system that Eagle LNG has been using is one that was already used in Alaska, and for Aruba, only the scale will change. The blueprint is already made for the area, and the technology is also already there.

"It's not necessary to wait 20 years for this to come to Aruba, and nat-



urally you don't do it just like that either." Here Mr. Diaz refers to the Environmental Impact Assessment, where Eco Vision together with Royalhaskoning (from the Netherlands) is going to look into every aspect, to 'see if the project can be realized or not'. "And if it can be realized, we must see which advices we must take into consideration when doing it. Right now we are already in this process", Mr. Diaz says.

It is calculated that by August of September 2022 this will be completed, Mr. Diaz says, adding that Eco Vision has a lot of data, but they don't want to focus only on flora and fauna and leave other things outside, so in this case, the current situation.

The upcoming works are only for the terminal, because the Pipe-

line Road still has not been identified. When this is identified, there will be another study on the social components, if it affects people at home, what the impact could be in case of an accident, if it's in an area with vegetation, etc.

Bastardo told our reporter that people associate LNG with large scale projects. "You must understand that the technology already exists worldwide for all types of scales. What needs to be done to make it affordable for these islands to receive LNG is to do it on the scale of the demand that the country has", Mr. Bastardo explains. He added that the size of the installation is made on the demand of WEB because it cannot be made any smaller. "This is what allows for it to be competitive, or make it more affordable, and to replace fuel oil", Mr. Bastardo said.





**Papillon Restaurant presents:
Chef's Garden, culinary magic by
European top chef in a romantic garden**

PALM BEACH —A true once-in-a-lifetime experience. The secret garden is located in a traditional Aruban cunucu house creating a magical ambiance. The Chef's Garden is a 6-course surprise menu with authentic classic French dishes by Dutch top chef Patrick van der Donk. You will leave this culinary Garden of Eden in an enchanted state creating a memory that will last a lifetime. Welcome in the world of wonders where ambiance, taste and service come together and you feel you are being welcomed in the home of the owner and her team.



Sometimes combining the best of the best is a matter of all things falling into place. Every Wednesday from 7pm to 10pm you are welcomed to enter a world where food is a passion. Papillon Restaurant presents their guest chef Patrick van der Donk - and with The Chef's Garden menu being a fresh concept on the island, we're sure you will fall completely in love with this.

A bit about guest chef Patrick

Chef Patrick van der Donk is a true legend on Aruba. Chef Patrick attended culinary school in the Netherlands where he worked with several of the best Dutch chefs, including two 3-star Michelin chefs who taught him all the tricks of the trade. He was also in-

spired by self-taught Michelin star chef Raymond Blanc OBE who has educated the most prominent British chefs of today.

The menu is carefully done with local products, fresh and perfectly matched with a selection of wines by local sommeliers. Vegan options are available; please inform them when you make your reservation.

The Secret Garden & Papillon

This is an in-home dining experience where you will feel you are part of an exclusive setting. Private culinary events are the owner's specialty and their lush, tropical garden is also inviting for you to relax and indulge in hours of authentic culinarian delights, a heaven to foodies. For more than a decade, Papillon restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. They know how to thrill and in collaboration with The Secret Garden we can only expect phenomenal. □

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Fundacion Stimami Sterilisami helps the image of Aruba



Oranjestad - On July 11, 2022, the Minister of Tourism and Public Health, Dangui Oduber, met with ATA Director Mrs. Ronella Croes, Yesenia Farro-Arends of the Department of Nature and Environment, and Mr. Ewald Biemans, owner and General Manager of the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort.

During the meeting, the Fundacion Stimami Sterilisami shared what they are doing to alleviate the stray dogs and cats problematic. In January 2022, the Tourism Product Enhancement Fund (TPEF) reinstated the subsidy for the Fundacion Stimami Sterelisami. TPEF has been the main sponsor for the sterilization programs of the foundation for a few years. It is a collaboration between the private sector and the pub-

lic sector. This foundation helps with stray dogs and cats sterilization. It also helps owners with their pet's sterilization. Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) is joining this cause and helping restart this program this year after the Covid pandemic forced the TPEF to stop their financial support to the foundation. In 2022, the TPEF will continue to subsidize the foundation joined by the ATA.

The Stimami Sterelisami Foundation invests the funds wisely and efficiently. It works with local veterinaries, and now they will also have a US vet to assist with the surgeries. In addition, it is currently negotiating a favorable fee to cover more surgeries with the available funds.

Tourism is not only targeting quality tourists to the island, improving service, and upgrading the tourism areas but is also the base to create a positive balance for the community, including the four-legged friends that have no place to call home. The objective of the Stimami Sterilisami foundation is to help the community of Aruba become more aware of the stray dogs and cats' problems on the island. It financed thousands of sterilization surgeries for stray cats and dogs.

The Minister thanked Mr. Biemans of the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort for being an equally important sponsor as the TPEF and ATA for this important sterilization program. They will match each donation sum received by the founda-

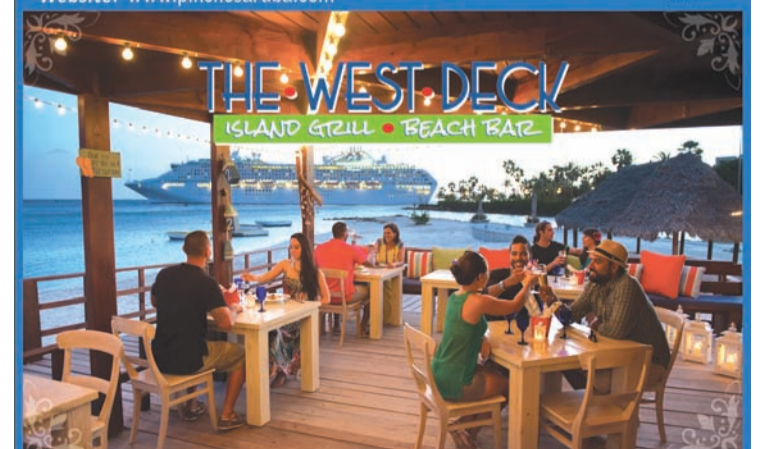
tion, which is something the Government is very grateful for.

The Government truly believes that the level of care given to our pets says a lot about our island. These programs help elevate the image of Aruba in the eyes of the visitors, which is the Government's vision.

The Minister is grateful to the TPEF, Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, and the Fundacion Stimami Sterelisami for their excellent job over the past years. □



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Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — as from now on two interesting museums on Aruba are open to the public again. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you the two locations.

The Museum of Industry in San Nicolas, also known as the art capital of Aruba, represents the history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations. A unique opportunity to learn about Aruba's history, as well as the vibrant cultural heritage of this part of the island. Learn about the incredible versatility Aruba has shown in history and the opportunity to experience the stories of those who were part of this history. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Iconic Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments fund in 2003 so it could be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Fundacion Museo Arubano (FMA), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban culture sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open On Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 9 am till 5 pm. For more information check out



their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba
The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in downtown Oranjestad has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of ap-

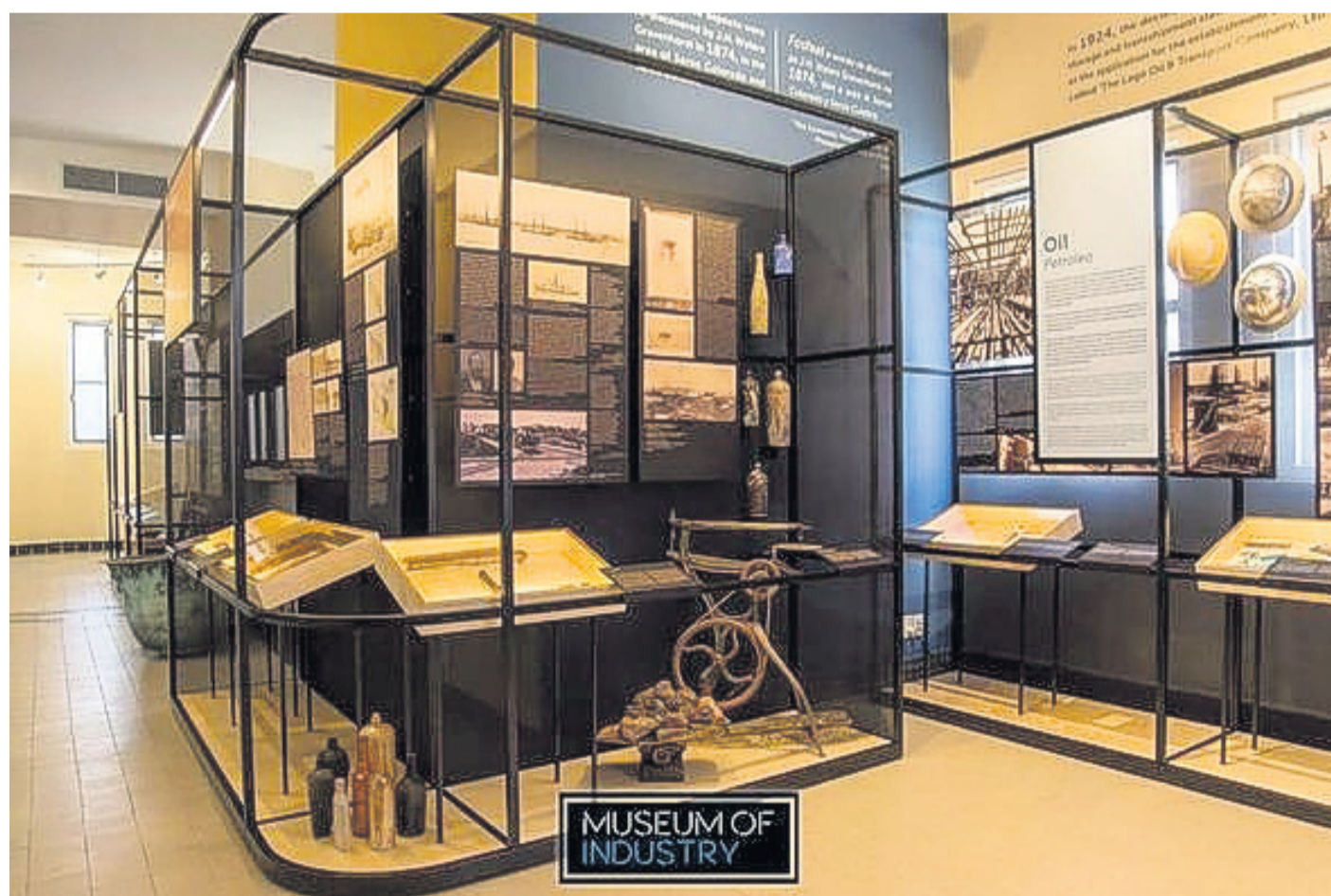
proximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997 the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004 a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006 restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the new to build exhibition space. In December 2007 the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts an attractive public program including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm.

For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □



Shanon Croes:

“When doing an activity to enjoy nature, do it with awareness”

Aruba is a beautiful island with a nature that must be preserved. The environment is a system formed by natural and artificial elements which relate to each other, and they are modified by human actions. This is something that sadly not a lot of people consider important.

Shanon Croes is someone who loves nature and dedicates his time to it, to eco-friendly adventures with the goal of promoting different areas around the island, like beaches, mangroves, hiking tours, during which he combines nature with the history of the island's first inhabitants, the Caquetio indians, and the discovery of Aruba by Spain in 1499.

During a special interview with our reporter, Croes said that these activities are eco-sustainable, during which they don't work with tools like motors or oil while doing the tour of the mangroves or beaches on kayak. The participants have to use their own strength, energy and power. If the tour includes snorkeling, a lot of time they include in this a ride on the kayak to reach the reef.

The idea for eco-friendly adventures on Aruba started many years ago, according to Croes. He loves kayak from a long time, and he bought a couple of kayaks in order to do certain activities with the locals or tourists, which eventually ended up becoming his business. Croes says that he tries to do the activities in the most sustainable way, taking into consideration the environment and ecosystem of the area. “We try to leave it as intact as possible, that is our idea.”

One of the countries in the region which is focused on sustainable tourism is Costa Rica. Croes says he wanted to take their example, and went to visit this country with 12 guests to do another tour abroad, to hike in the wilderness, on hills, and go on the ocean on a kayak. “To do sustainable activities in another country, which also has beautiful scenery”, he said.

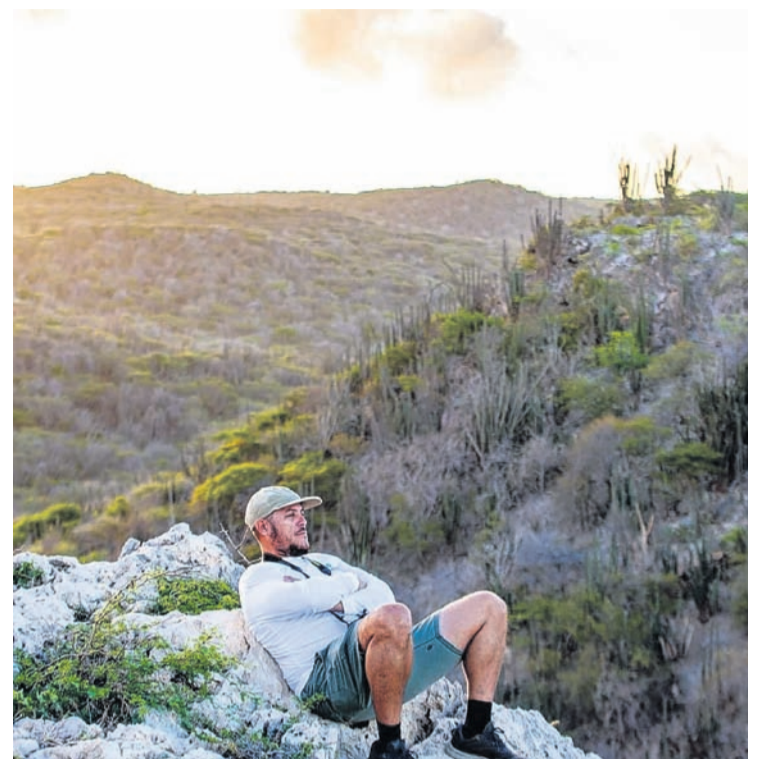
In 2018, Croes started working with The Shack Aruba. But his experience with kayak goes back a lot earlier, with different routes which can start from Santo Largo,

with the Mangrove Tunnel Tour, finishing in Mangel Halto; another one is called the Mangel Halto Reef Tour, starting also at Mangel Halto, going by the Balashi bridge where they go on the reef for a while, and then finish back at Mangel Halto.

Every once in a while they do a long-distance tour, for example starting at Mangel Halto and ending at Moomba Beach, a route which can take approximately six hours. These usually involve around ten participants with two or three guides. Participants in these tours must have long-distance kayaking experience. “Even though it's not that hard, but your physical condition must be to a certain level, must know the ocean, and how to row, etc.”

Although Croes is not the only person doing kayak activities, the difference is that he does long-distance. “I try every time to do something different, like combining hiking with kayak, where we start at Rodgers Beach and finish at Nikky Beach”, he explains. They also restarted their tour of the caves in Colony, ‘which is very interesting’, after more than two years of Covid-19 pandemic.

Spain discovered Aruba in



the year 1499, and afterwards, in 1636 the Dutch arrived. The original inhabitants of the region are the Caquetio indians who came from Venezuela. Heritage is one of the most interesting hiking activities that Croes does in order to show the history of our little island. This starts at Rooi Lamoenchi and finishes at Boca Prins Fonteijn.

For Croes, it is important that ‘when a person or group does an activity to enjoy nature, to do it with awareness, without producing waste. When we go into the wilderness we not only go for a walk, we also give information about the flora and fauna in the

ecosystem, the birds, all the animals, of our terrain. We come from a volcanic island, that is our terrain. We must choose to do more sustainable activities to take care of our environment. We have been depending on tourism for a long time, and a lot of time we let tourists do what they want. When you allow them to do this with our nature, that is not ideal”, he said.

If you're curious about these tours, visit our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/arubato-day>, to watch our Ask Pilar video with The Shack Tour, or scan the QR code.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS** 37 Copying
 1 Country division 38 Benefits
 6 Bank sub-traction 40 Creative sort
 11 Two-dot character 42 Like argon
 12 Kagan of the Supreme Court 43 Happening
 13 Modify 44 Moves
 14 Loses freshness 45 High homes
 15 Research site
 16 Misery 17 Add too
 18 Ran into 19 LAX guess
 20 Wall climber
 21 Galena, for one
 22 Downfall
 24 Travel stops
 25 Draw in
 27 Reduced amount
 29 Secret meetings
 32 Fire leftover
 33 Target
 34 Woolen cap
 35 Hotel amenity
 36 Bond, for one

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Yesterday's answer

- 7 Inventor Whitney
 8 Triple Crown leg
 9 Hospital worker
 10 Samples
 17 Add too much to the bill
 23 "— been real!"
 24 Far from cordial
 26 Green plastic toys
 27 Dog star
 28 Site of Sevilla
 30 Natural gift
 31 Know-how
 33 Helpers: Abbr.

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7-15

A XYDLBAAXR
 is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-15

CRYPTOQUOTE

GTBL TC BN XLGA OLKJHRW

BLR YKUL XLLR JTWG KRJ

YTVGLG . — LOHDKXLAY

A KNOTV

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ANYONE CAN BREAK THIN WOODEN STICKS, BUT IT IS HARD TO BREAK A BUNDLE OF THE SAME. — OLD SAYING

EXPLAINER: Twitter, Musk and the Delaware Chancery Court



Tesla CEO Elon Musk attends the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, March 22, 2022.

Associated Press

By RANDALL CHASE
 AP Business Writer

DOVER, Del. (AP) — Twitter Inc.'s lawsuit to force billionaire Elon Musk to make good on his promise to buy the social media giant will be resolved in a small but powerful Delaware court that specializes in high-stakes business disputes. Twitter has sued Musk in Delaware's Court of Chancery in an effort to force him to complete a \$44 billion takeover deal reached in April.

WHAT IS THE LAWSUIT ABOUT?

Musk, the world's richest man, pledged to pay \$54.20 a share for Twitter but now wants to back out of the agreement. He claims the company has failed to provide adequate information about the number of fake, or "spam bot," Twitter accounts, and that it has breached its obligations under the deal by firing top managers and laying off a significant number of employees.

Twitter argues that Musk, CEO of electric car maker and solar energy company Tesla Inc., has operated in bad faith and is deliberately trying to tank the deal because market conditions have deteriorated and the acquisition no longer serves his interests. According to the lawsuit, the value of Musk's shares in Tesla, which he was to draw upon to help finance the acquisition, has declined by more than \$100 billion since November.

Either Musk or Twitter would be entitled to a \$1 billion

breakup fee if the other party is found responsible for the agreement failing. Twitter wants more, however, and is seeking a court order directing Musk to follow through with the deal.

WHEN DOES THE TRIAL START?

Twitter lawyers are asking the court to expedite the case. They have proposed a four-day trial starting Sept. 19.

WHAT IS THE COURT OF CHANCERY?

The Court of Chancery, established in 1792, traces its roots to the High Court of Chancery of Great Britain, which in turn evolved from an earlier institution in feudal England known as the King's Chapel. The court, overseen by the lord chancellor as "keeper of the king's conscience," served as an alternative to the more rigid and inefficient common law courts. It held the power to offer remedies such as injunctions, estate administration, and, notably, "specific performance," which can force a party to complete a transaction against its will.

The 230-year-old Court of Chancery typically handles civil cases where a plaintiff is seeking non-monetary damages. Such cases can include disputes over property boundaries and land purchases, guardianship appointments, and estates, trusts and wills.

More often than not, they involve business disputes pitting companies against disgruntled shareholders, or parties to failed mergers and acquisitions against

one another.

HOW DOES THE COURT OF CHANCERY WORK TODAY?

The seven judges on the Delaware Court of Chancery exercise these powers today, making it a key venue for high-stakes business disputes. Delaware features a well-established and carefully nurtured body of corporate case law dating to 1899 and is the corporate home to more than 1 million business entities, including more than 60% of Fortune 500 companies. Many merger agreements, in fact, specify that any disputes will be heard by a Delaware Chancery Court judge.

"It's not that they are necessarily more brilliant than judges in other states, they just have a lot of exposure to this stuff and are pretty sophisticated about it," said Lawrence Hamermesh, executive director of the Institute for Law & Economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

HAS MUSK BEEN IN THIS COURT BEFORE?

Musk is no stranger to the Court of Chancery. Earlier this year, he emerged victorious in a shareholder lawsuit accusing him of a conflict of interest in Tesla's 2016 acquisition of SolarCity, a struggling solar panel company in which Musk was the largest shareholder and also served as board chairman.

Hamermesh, a former professor of corporate and business law at Widener University Delaware Law School, noted that the specific performance sought by Twitter is a "pretty rare" remedy, and that it's uncertain whether the court will force Musk to consummate the deal.

"There are a lot of instances where a judge could say, 'Buyer, you're in breach,' but the remedy is a termination fee," he said. "Given what I have seen so far, my gut instinct is that Twitter's got the upper hand legally. Whether they'll get the full specific performance or just the breakup fee is a little harder to say." □

Log4j software flaw 'endemic,' new cyber safety panel says

By **ALAN SUDERMAN**
Associated Press

A computer vulnerability discovered last year in a ubiquitous piece of software is an "endemic" problem that will pose security risks for potentially a decade or more, according to a new cybersecurity panel created by President Joe Biden.

The Cyber Safety Review Board said in a report Thursday that while there hasn't been sign of any major cyberattack due to the Log4j flaw, it will still "be exploited for years to come."

"Log4j is one of the most serious software vulnerabilities in history," the board's chairman, Department of Homeland Security Under Secretary Rob Silvers, told reporters Wednesday.

The Log4j flaw, made public late last year, lets internet-based attackers easily seize control of everything from industrial control systems to web servers and consumer electronics. The first obvious signs of the flaw's exploitation appeared in Minecraft, a hugely popular online game owned by Microsoft.

The flaw's discovery prompted urgent warnings by government officials and massive efforts by cybersecurity professionals to patch vulnerable systems. The board said Thursday that "somewhat surprisingly" the exploitation of the



The Department of Homeland Security logo is seen during a news conference in Washington, Feb. 25, 2015.

Associated Press

Log4j bug had occurred at lower levels than experts predicted. The board also said that it was unaware of any "significant" Log4j attacks on critical infrastructure systems but noted that some cyberattacks go unreported.

The board said future attacks are likely in large part because Log4j is routinely embedded with other software and can be hard for organizations to find running in their systems. "This event is not over," Silvers said.

Log4j, written in the Java programming language, logs user activity on computers. Developed and maintained by a handful of volunteers under the auspices of the open-source Apache Software Foundation, it is extremely popular with commercial software developers.

A security researcher at the Chinese tech giant Alibaba notified the foundation on Nov. 24. It took two weeks to develop and release a fix. Chinese media reported that the government punished Alibaba for not reporting the flaw earlier to state officials.

The board said Thursday it found "troubling elements" with the Chinese government's policy toward vul-

nerability disclosures, saying it could give Chinese state hackers an early look at computer flaws they could use for nefarious means like stealing trade secrets or spying on dissidents. The Chinese government has long denied wrongdoing in cyberspace and told the board that it encourages improved information sharing on software vulnerabilities. □



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- WK 7 and 14 - all views

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Review: 'Paws of Fury' a sad, declawed 'Blazing Saddles'

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

Writer and director Mel Brooks' 1974 Western spoof "Blazing Saddles" tackled racism so head-on that Brooks recently mused he wouldn't be able to make the film today. Maybe, just maybe, he has done just that with "Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank," but at a terrible cost.

Paramount's limp, animated remake actually triggers new stereotypes in the service of trying to expose racism for a pre-teen audience. The studio seems to have reached for legitimacy by bringing the venerated Brooks along for the bumpy ride, darkening both legacies.

What emerged sits uneasily at the corner of tribute, parody, theft and laziness. "Paws of Fury" follows Brooks' original playbook right down to a horse-punching moment and a group farting scene but doesn't capture his thrilling boundary-pushing vibe.

"Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank" switches the setting from the original film's American West for an animated medieval Japan but is really of no time, and not in a good way. There is a timid, punning humor, as when a character announces "There's no business like shogun business."



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows characters Chuck, voiced by Gabriel Iglesias, left, and Ichiro, voiced by Aasif Mandvi in a scene from "Paws of Fury: The Legend of Hank." Associated Press

This is a Japan with cherry blossoms and origami and also dance clubs with VIP sections and house music. It has no real setting. The animators only a few times mix up the visuals, giving the film a predictable, big-eyed and overly violent look.

The screenplay by Ed Stone and Nate Hopper builds so much off "Blazing Saddles" that the original films' writers are credited, including Brooks, Norman Steinberg, Andrew Bergman, Richard

Pryor and Alan Uger. For a while, the film was even titled "Blazing Samurai."

In both cases, an evil plan is hatched to send a rookie lawman to a town that instinctively hates him in hopes that townsfolk will scatter.

In the film, it is a Black man in a racist town in the Old West. In "Paws of Fury," it's a dog in a community of dog-hating cats. Why Japan is natural for this setting is never convincingly made.

The put-upon pup Hank (voiced without distinction by Michael Cera) seeks a mentorship with a worn-out cat samurai (a perfectly cast Samuel L. Jackson) and the two begin a push-pull dance so familiar that Hank turns to his teacher and asks "Hey, this is the training montage isn't it?" That winking and fourth-wall breaking is a running joke, but it's not clear to what end. This is a film that borrows much of "Kung Fu Panda" and adds "Star

Wars" references — "The cuteness is strong with this one" — and "Jurassic Park" gags, and sometimes has tone-deafness due to its long gestation, like this line: "Guns don't kill cats. Cars and curiosity kill cats." That lands differently in summer 2022.

Many of the jokes — both traditional visual smacks and verbal joists — are dated and just not up to snuff. One dog gets hit in the face by a Japanese pot and that's called "woking the dog," "NWA" stands for "ninjas with attitude" and twice this gag is offered: "In case of emergency, break paper."

Ricky Gervais is excellent as a scheming noble cat, George Takei gets to offer his trademark catchphrase "Oh, myyy" twice and Brooks voices the shogun with his rat-a-tat one-liners. One recurring bit simply doesn't work — a big toilet joke — but the filmmakers return to it again and again.

Eventually, Hank proves himself a warrior, and the dog-hating cat town embraces their canine protector.

"Go back where you came from" is exchanged for "We can all be better together." But as important as that lesson is, this is a poor vehicle to send it. □

Ada Limón named the 24th U.S. poet laureate



In this undated photo provided by the Library of Congress, Ada Limón poses for a portrait in Washington.

Associated Press

By **HILLEL ITALIE**

NEW YORK (AP) — The country's next poet laureate,

Ada Limón, has long thought of her work as a public art form.

"I grew up with poetry being in the community," says Limón, a native of Sonoma, California. "It wasn't supposed to just be something read on page; it was supposed to be read out loud. I remember going to poetry readings at the bookstore where I worked when I was 16. It's the oral tradition. That part of poetry has always remained true to me."

On Tuesday, the Library of Congress announced that the 46-year-old Limón had been named the 24th U.S. poet laureate, officially called the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. Her

1-year term begins Sept. 29 with the traditional reading at the Library's Coolidge Auditorium, one of the laureate's few formal obligations. Limón, who succeeds Joy Harjo, is an award-winning and unusually popular poet, her acclaimed collection "Bright Dead Things" selling more than 40,000 copies. She has published six books of poetry, most recently "The Hurting Kind," and also hosts the podcast "The Slowdown."

"Ada Limón is a poet who connects," Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden said in a statement. "Her accessible, engaging poems ground us in where we are and who we share

our world with. They speak of intimate truths, of the beauty and heartbreak that is living, in ways that help us move forward."

The position was established in 1985, with other laureates including Louise Glück, W.S. Merwin and Rita Dove. Laureates receive a \$35,000 stipend, along with \$5,000 for travel expenses, the funding originating not from the government, but from a private gift made decades ago by the philanthropist Archer M. Huntington.

While the job is officially based in Washington, D.C., the poets are not required to live there — Limón will mostly work from her home

in Lexington, Kentucky — and are generally free to shape the position around their passions. "The Slowdown" podcast grew out of a project launched by Tracy K. Smith when she served as laureate from 2017-2019.

Limón is known in part for her poems about nature and hopes to give readings at parks and other settings that emphasize and celebrate our place in the world.

"Poetry is a way of to remember our relationship with the natural world is reciprocal," she says. "It's having a place to breathe and having a place to pay attention." □

NHL free agency: Devils sign Palat, Capitals add Strome

By JOHN WAWROW and
STEPHEN WHYNO
AP Hockey Writers

A day after the New Jersey Devils missed out on the top prize in NHL free agency, they landed two-time Stanley Cup champion Ondrej Palat on Thursday.

The Washington Capitals, meanwhile, continued their busy offseason by agreeing to terms with former Chicago Blackhawks forward Dylan Strome, according to a person with knowledge of the move who person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the deal had not been announced. The Devils signed Palat to a \$30 million, five-year contract. The left-winger had 52 points in 71 games during Tampa Bay's three consecutive trips to the Cup Final. He finished sixth in Conn Smythe Trophy voting as playoff MVP this year.

Tampa Bay attempted to keep the 31-year-old from Czechia and defenseman Jan Rutt, who signed with Pittsburgh, but couldn't make the salary cap numbers work. Instead, general manager Julien BriseBois signed defensemen Mikhail Sergachev and Erik Cernak and center Anthony Cire-



Tampa Bay Lightning left wing Ondrej Palat (18) controls a puck during the first period of Game 4 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup Finals against the Colorado Avalanche on June 22, 2022, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

lli to eight-year extensions through 2031.

The Devils landed Palat after losing the Johnny Gaudreau sweepstakes to the Columbus Blue Jackets. Gaudreau signed a \$68.25 million, eight-year contract with Columbus after deciding to leave Calgary. His decision came after an initial frenzy of signings, including the Washing-

ton Capitals getting Cup-winning goaltender Darcy Kuemper and Giroux leaving Florida for Ottawa.

Strome is Washington's latest addition after Chicago decided against a qualifying offer to keep him around. The 25-year-old scored a career-high 22 goals last season and added 26 assists in 69 games. The Capitals previously

signed Darcy Kuemper to be their starting goaltender and Charlie Lindgren to be their backup, re-signed winger Marcus Johansson and defenseman Matt Irwin, and replaced Justin Schultz on the blue line with another Blackhawks cast-off, Erik Gustafsson. They acquired winger Connor Brown from the Ottawa Senators for a 2024 second-

round pick.

Ottawa also stayed busy, following up on signing former Flyers captain Claude Giroux by locking up third-year center Josh Norris through the 2029-30 season with a \$63.3 million, eight-year deal.

The spree of signings that occurred during the first day of free agency slowed to a trickle on Thursday, with forward Nazem Kadri and defenseman John Klingberg the most notable names still on the market.

The reigning champion Colorado Avalanche have said they would like to bring back Kadri, who helped them win it all. The Dallas Stars all but ruled out keeping Klingberg, who could still sign one of the biggest contracts of the offseason. The Senators continued building on what could be the most promising offseason in the franchise's 30-year history with Norris' signing.

Selected 19th in the 2017 draft, the 23-year-old from Michigan is considered a key fixture on a young, developing team. He's coming off a season in which he scored a team-leading 35 goals and 55 points in 66 games. □

Pidcock wins Alpe d'Huez stage, Vingegaard keeps Tour lead

ALPE D'HUEZ, France (AP)

— In his first Tour de France, 22-year-old Tom Pidcock became the youngest winner of a stage on the iconic Alpe d'Huez mountain after crossing the line solo at the ski resort on Thursday, when Jonas Vingegaard kept the overall lead.

The mountain bike Olympic champion from Britain attacked on the ascent, and his frenetic pace up the legendary 21 hairpin bends was too fast for his breakaway companions.

"That was certainly one of my best experiences in cycling," said Pidcock, a jack of all trades who also owns a cyclocross world title. "It's unreal when you're literally slaloming through people's flags, fists and God knows what else. You can't experience that anywhere else

other than the Alpe d'Huez in the Tour de France."

For his first day in the yellow jersey, Vingegaard finished three minutes, 23 seconds behind Pidcock to keep his overall lead intact. The Jumbo-Visma team leader was in a group including defending champion Tadej Pogacar and 2018 Tour winner Geraint Thomas.

Pogacar, who cracked on Thursday in the first big Alpine stage, tested his rival twice in the last three kilometers but Vingegaard responded with ease. Vingegaard leads Pogacar by two minutes, 22 seconds, with Thomas third, 2:26 off the pace.

Pidcock and four-time champion Chris Froome had joined forces earlier in the day in the downhill of the Col du Galibier to

catch the breakaway. The daunting 165-kilometer (102.5-mile) Stage 12 from Briancon featured three tough climbs so difficult that they are classified as "beyond category" — the Col du Galibier, the Col de La Croix de Fer and the climb to Alpe d'Huez.

At the foot of the final climb, the five remaining breakaway riders — Louis Meintjes, Froome, Pidcock, Neilson Powless and Giulio Ciccone — had a lead of more than six minutes on the group including all the main contenders.

Amid the sound of cowbells and flares lit by some of the hundreds of thousands of fans lining the road, Pidcock accelerated with 10.5-kilometer left as he dropped Powless and Ciccone.



Stage winner Britain's Thomas Pidcock celebrates as he crosses the finish line of the twelfth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 165.5 kilometers (102.8 miles) with start in Briancon and finish in Alpe d'Huez, France, Thursday, July 14, 2022.

Associated Press

Meintjes and Froome stayed in contention a bit longer but Pidcock attacked again to dash Froome's hopes of claiming a first win since the crash that nearly ended his career three years ago.

Pidcock beat the record of Colombia's Lucho Herrera, who was 23 when he won on Alpe d'Huez in 1984. Meintjes was second at the top, 48 seconds behind, and Froome completed the stage podium. □

A rookie rises and Tiger crashes in slow-moving British Open

By **DOUG FERGUSON**

AP Golf Writer

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland (AP)

— The Old Course was never faster. The pace of play was never slower.

The celebrated start Thursday of the 150th British Open gave way to Cameron Young making his debut with an 8-under 64 for a two-shot lead over Rory McIlroy, and Tiger Woods making what could be his last competitive appearance at St. Andrews a short one.

His score would indicate as much. Woods began his round by hitting out of a divot into the Swilcan Burn for a double bogey. He ended it by taking three putts through the Valley of Sin for a par and a 78, his second-worst score in his Open career.

Woods has never had to leave an Open at St. Andrews before the weekend.

"Looks like I'm going to have to shoot 66 tomorrow to have a chance," Woods said. "Guys did it today. And that's my responsibility tomorrow is to go ahead and do it — need to do it." Young and McIlroy didn't have to contend with as much wind in the morning, though St. Andrews has seen far stronger gusts over its centuries of golf. Throw in the humps and mounds and difficult pin positions, and the Old Course held its own.

"It's the fiddliest Open that I've played. It's the only way I can really describe it," McIlroy said. "OK, the 18th at Carnoustie was like a runway, that fairway. But around the greens here and just all the slopes and undulations and everything, I think as the tournament progresses, you're going to get some funny bounces and it's going to test your patience at times." Nothing tested the pa-



Tiger Woods of the U.S. reacts to dust after playing a shot on the 1st hole during the first round of the British Open golf championship on the Old Course at St. Andrews, Scotland, Thursday, July 14 2022.

Associated Press

tience like the constant waiting. By late afternoon, the rounds were taking just over six hours. They waited on the tee and in the fairway, and it didn't help with so many players looking for the best angles to tight pins and playing to the left into other fairways.

"It's the way the golf course is set up. It's how firm it is," U.S. Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick said after his 72. "The way the golf course is designed ... to get better angles and better lines, you've got to hit across all the fairways. There's nothing you can do unfortunately about it. It's just sad more than anything. It's just ridiculous."

Good scores were available, and 54 players broke par, 26 of them with rounds in the 60s.

Young was a surprise leader only because it's his first time competing on an Open links. He has had one of the better rookie

seasons on the PGA Tour, and the 25-year-old New Yorker is not the least bit daunted by the stage. Just two months ago, he contended into the final hour of the PGA Championship until finishing one shot out of a playoff.

Young played smartly and took advantage of the birdie chances. He reached 7 under through 12 holes with the wind helping on the inward nine. He missed two good chances, finished with a birdie and most importantly kept bogeys off his card.

"I don't think that I played a perfect round of golf," Young said. "I scored really well. And I think we thought our way around the way you have to out there."

Young figures he knows only a fraction of the secrets to Old Course — no one ever really figures it all out with so many conditions on the ground and in the air — and there was one

occasion on the par-5 fifth when he looked at his note in the yardage book: "Hard left is better than right." He went left and made birdie.

"We did stuff like that a few times today," Young said. Players Championship winner Cameron Smith and English qualifier Robert Dinwiddie each had a 67. Dinwiddie had the best score of the afternoon, when the wind was at its strongest. The large group at 66 included Masters champion Scottie Scheffler, Dustin Johnson and even Barclay Brown, the English amateur who plays at Stanford. Xander Schauffele, coming off his second straight win last week, was in the group a 69.

Scheffler tried to explain just how fast the links were playing by suggesting the ball was rolling faster on the fairways than on the greens. Then he realized that actually was the case. It gets that way at St. Andrews when the ground is crispy and the Open comes to the gray, old town.

"They are? I'm glad I'm not losing my mind," Scheffler said.

McIlroy looked free as ever at St. Andrews, his first time back for the Open since 2010. His game is in good

shape and he piled up five birdies through 12 holes, with only one careless play that led to his lone bogey on the 13th.

"Fantastic start. Just what you hope will happen when you're starting off your week," McIlroy said. "I did everything that you're supposed to do around St Andrews."

Then again, good starts are nothing new this year. He led the PGA Championship after 18 holes and was one shot behind after the first round of the U.S. Open. Both times, he couldn't hold it together until he had fallen too far behind to catch up.

"I need to go out tomorrow and back up what I just did today," he said.

Defending champion Collin Morikawa struggled with his putting and had a 72. Morikawa knew how long of a day he was in for when there was a group on the fifth tee, and the group ahead was just starting to walk toward the fairway.

"Xander and I talked about it. We're watching more golf than we ever have," said Morikawa, referring to how both rarely watch on TV. "You stay in the fairway and you're watching two other groups play golf."

It was hard to watch Woods at times. He was 6 over through seven holes, missing more putts than usual and missing left off the tee. His tee shot on No. 7 was so far left that it wound up in a bunker in the 12th fairway, leading to another double bogey.

There were consecutive birdies around the turn, but little else to celebrate.

Woods had pointed to this week even as his shattered right leg from a February 2021 car crash kept him from playing. The Open probably won't return to St. Andrews for another five years, and the 46-year-old Woods can't help but wonder if he'll be playing at a high level by then.

"This was always on the calendar to hopefully be well enough to play it. And I am," he said. "And just didn't do a very good job of it." □

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